

# DNREC honors Delaware's 2016 Wetland Warriors at State Fair

**HARRINGTON** – Today at the Delaware State Fair, Governor Jack Markell and DNREC Secretary David Small honored wetland professional and geologist Bartholomew Wilson and teachers Robin Moxley and Patricia Bear as Delaware's 2016 Wetland Warriors for their efforts to conserve and restore wetlands and to educate young Delawareans about the importance of these vital areas.

"Wetlands are one of Delaware's most important natural resources, buffering our land and communities against coastal storms, absorbing and filtering water on its way to the Delaware River, Bay and ocean or the Chesapeake Bay, and providing precious habitat for our wildlife," said DNREC Secretary David Small. "Today, we are recognizing and thanking three Delaware Wetland Warriors who have dedicated their careers to wetlands protection, conservation and education."

Bart Wilson, this year's Wetland Warrior in the professional category, has spent his career working with state and federal agencies and non-governmental and private sector organizations to promote wetland restoration and water quality improvements across Delaware. He has worked on numerous committees and task forces, water quality best management practices (BMPs), living shoreline projects, and performed outreach and education to the general public.

Currently, Wilson works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, managing the largest combined shoreline and marsh restoration project ever undertaken in the State of Delaware at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Milton. This \$38 million project, which focuses on building storm and sea level

rise resiliency back into the natural landscape and creating habitat for birds, is repairing breached marshes and reconstructing damaged shorelines to 4,000 acres of tidal marsh.

“As a resource, there is nothing else like wetlands. Wetlands are a dynamic intersection of land and sea that can be very robust yet fragile, and a vital and unique resource where life begins for so many species and where many components of our environment are recycled,” Wilson said. “My fascination with wetlands started with researching the evolution of wetlands after the last ice age. It always amazes me that during those extreme changes in sea level, tidal wetlands found a way to persist and continue to evolve, even as they do today on a different scale.”

Sharing this year’s Wetland Warrior Award in the education and outreach category are two veteran teachers from the Appoquinimink School District. Both recently retired – Robin Moxley with 30 years and Patti Bear with 31. For 21 years, Mss. Moxley and Bear team-taught fifth grade science, with a special passion for wetlands that they shared with several generations of students, leaving a legacy of young Delawareans well-prepared to appreciate and care for our wetlands for years to come.

“Patti and I always tried to involve our students with hands-on outdoor activities to enhance learning in the classroom,” Moxley said. “We drew on local resources – we took our students to [DNREC’s] Aquatic Resources Education Center, worked with their wetlands kits, did beach cleanups and other activities to let them see and touch wetlands and make them real.”

The Wetland Warrior Award, now in its ninth year, is presented annually to a citizen, organization or business that has demonstrated exemplary efforts to benefit Delaware wetlands in the areas of outreach and education, monitoring and

assessment, or restoration and protection.

“Delaware’s wetlands are a valuable natural resource that helps defend our coastlines and purify our drinking waters,” said Brittany Haywood, DNREC Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program. “A lot of great work is being done to protect wetlands throughout the state by everyday citizens, scientists and students. This award aims to acknowledge and thank them for all of their hard work.”

Next year’s call for nominations will be posted in the spring on the [Delaware Wetlands website](#). For details about past Delaware Wetland Warriors, please click [Wetland Warrior](#).

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